

What They Represent

Agriculture is not alone in its demands for substantial tariff reduction, nor is farm implements the only line of human necessity in which a reduced tariff would be marked in the interests of the Canadian people. We want cheaper houses, cheaper fuel and cheaper clothing, free lumber, free coal, free cloth. We want to raise our revenues not by taxing what the masses have to live on but what the spoilers for the past thirty years in Canada, under our protective tariff system, have been purloining from the public and the people. The farmers of the West went to Ottawa with the whole country from Lake Superior to the mountains behind them. They spoke primarily for what the farming community most urgently demands, but they spoke for the whole Canadian West. The West is for tariff reform and is determined to have it. The American West and Middle West obliterated party lines to force their opinions upon a government that believed it existed first of all to "protect" the giant infant industries of the New England states. The farmers of the Canadian West hide-bound to party are destined to make the same break and produce the same results. One of the most hopeful signs for the future of the "common" people is the fact that they have reached that stage where they dare to believe their interests are worth protecting, not by tariffs but from tariffs imposed for the benefit of the few.

MY OPINION ON SOME MATTERS NUMBER 26

CANADIAN FARMERS BID FAIR TO SHOW THAT THEY MUST BE CONSIDERED

A pilgrimage of organized farmers from all parts of Canada to the capital city, filled with a determination to show the Dominion government that certain matters must be attended to, is unique in Canadian history. To the present cabinet it will be strong evidence that the agricultural class will not be denied. When men will journey over half way across the American continent in order to prove that they really want the government to do things, there is little danger of them being turned down.

It was interesting and very encouraging to anyone interested in agriculture to note the enthusiasm that prevailed among the half thousand or more that went from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. They were set on three things: Government ownership of terminal elevators, the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway and tariff revision. Surely no one will question the advisability of these requests being granted—at least no one who wishes to give the farmer a fair chance in the business world. The only question on which there is room for doubt, it seems to me, is the one relating to the Hudson Bay Railway. There always will be a difference of opinion on this until it is constructed and in operation for a number of years. I'll not say what I think about whether or not it should be government-owned and operated. I might suggest, however, that in the rush for government aid there is a danger of going too far. We need help from our governments, but we should consider what they best can afford to go after first.

Perhaps some of the farmers of the eastern provinces will object to government ownership of terminal elevators. However, if they listen to what delegates from the West can tell them, a few speeches will convince them that we are justified in asking for government ownership. It seems to me the move would be a boon to the grain grower on the prairies.

The tariff question being so complicated natur-

ally leads to difficulties in discussion and in the working out of details. There surely will be strong opposition to the army of farmers from the manufacturers. However, the tendency is to freer trade and tariff reform that at least will provide for the farmer getting his farm machinery and implements at lower rates. Along with such changes naturally will come revisions that will help the bulk of the common people.

It will be interesting further to watch developments. What effect will it have on Parliament Hill? Will those in power consider that the demands should be granted in all fairness and justice? Will they grant one or more of them just to catch votes when election day again comes round? Will they refuse to consider anything suggested? The future will show the results of the delegation's visit. Perhaps the organized farmers often will be heard to advantage.

* AIRCHIE McCURE.

Day Labor Expensive System

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

It seems to me that THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, in urging the necessity of good roads and in stimulating interest in maintaining the best possible roads, is doing a great deal more than we generally realize for the permanent prosperity of the Canadian West. Without good roads to our railways we are like Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, with his crops and his animals, but no way of getting them off. Everyone realizes the necessity of good roads. But population has scattered over the West so rapidly that it has seemed impossible to supply roads adequate to the needs of the settlers. The whole West is handicapped for lack of good roads, all the way from Eastern Manitoba to Western Alberta. We lose money every year on account of bad roads. Our wagons and buggies are knocked to pieces over them; our bones are jolted till it is a wonder our joints don't part; our horses are fretted by the ever-swinging tongue as the wagon jolts over the little unevennesses, and they have the life drawn out of them climbing steep grades, and getting through the soft places. How many a man is ham-strung in his farm work by the loss of a good team, and how often the loss of the team can be directly laid at the door of the hard draws over bad roads. We can't shut our eyes to the conditions. We must face them and overcome them.

I propose to deal with the present conditions in the supply of this fundamental need of the farmer—good roads—pointing out where the present system of making roads is entirely inadequate. In an article later I intend dealing with the advantages and disadvantages of having road work done on a larger scale, and by contract. If it is fair to judge systems by results, it seems clear that in all three prairie provinces there is need for a decided advance if there are to be adequate transportation arteries for our produce to flow at the least possible cost from the farm to the railways.

First, then, let us look at the present methods of meeting the need for roads.

In Saskatchewan, the central authority has been grappling with its big task of building the thousands of miles of road urgently needed to supply the demands of settlement. In the first year or two after autonomy foremen were engaged by the department of public works, at a fair salary, to oversee the most difficult road construction, under the direction of an able civil engineer. Where the roads were most urgently needed thither a foreman was sent, with a small permanent gang of men and teams to form the nucleus of a larger gang formed by hiring farmers' teams near the place of work, whenever these were available. Much good road construction was done in this way, but the expensive principle of day labor was applied throughout. The old man was right when he said that when he heard a bucksaw he could always tell whether the man using it was working by the day or by the job. The department of public works for Saskatchewan adopted this system only temporarily and, I believe, has largely abandoned

it, having adopted the plan of making appropriations for road work to rural municipalities, the money so allotted being spent by the rural municipalities under the direction of a public works inspector. But the principle of day labor is still adhered to largely throughout the West, if not altogether, and the day labor of farmers is relied on. In my judgment this is the weakness of the present system of building our roads, for day labor is recognized the world over as being the most expensive method of getting any work done. More than that, it is at a loss that most farmers take their men and teams from their fields to do road work. Further, at the present rate of construction by the day labor system Western roads over wide areas throughout the three prairie provinces will not be built within the present generation, to say nothing of the exacting work of keeping them in repair.

We are like a man running to catch a railway train that has got nicely started, and is increasing speed rapidly, for every step the man runs the train travels five times the distance. The only way for the man to catch the train is to take a special. It is with this special that I propose to deal in a following paper.

D. R.

Western Wheat Growing

OUR ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

The London "World's Work" has had a commissioner in Western Canada during the past summer, and he has written a series of articles on Western development which have been very readable and interesting. In the November issue there is a glowing account of wheat farming, which is in many respects admirable. However, he gives but one side of the picture, and that the bright one. A Britisher reading the article would conclude that this was a typical picture—knowing the general reliability of the World's Work—and imagine that all the farmers of the West were rapidly turning the golden grain into golden sovereigns, and that fortunes came quite easily to wheat growers.

Those on the spot well know that taking one year with another over, say, a decade, that wheat growing pays fairly well for a time, and in doing so a great deal of hard work has to be performed for a living profit. The commissioner says nothing of what has followed continuous grain growing in the older sections of the West; how the depletion of fertility has been followed by an ever-increasing area of weed-choked lands which necessitate a long, stern fight to overcome—not to speak of profit.

Mention is made in the article of yields as high as 60 bushels of wheat to the acre, and while this is said to be exceptional, the writer claims that "to take it all round an average crop will run into 35 bushels of wheat." With all due respect one must protest against 35 bushels being adduced as an average crop of wheat in the West. Good as Western Canadian land is on the whole, the government crop reports give the average of wheat in the West at about 20 bushels to the acre. This is excellent, compared to the average of 13 bushels in the United States, but is a far different figure to a claimed average of 35 bushels. Why the carefully rotated wheat lands of Great Britain do not reach this high figure, and here we only take one crop in four of wheat!

The truth is good enough for Canada, and no good purpose is served by sensational figures, which can easily be proved to be exaggerated. The commissioner confutes his own figures by stating that in 1909 (and we know that the Western wheat crop of that year was exceptionally good) "4,085,000 acres produced 90,215,000 bushels of wheat." At his average of 35 bushels, this acreage ought to have produced over 140 million bushels, instead of 90 millions.

How many Western farmers who have farmed for twenty years in the West will endorse this statement: "That the men on the prairie, a thousand miles or so away (from Fort William) are piling up large fortunes?"

F. DEWHIRST.